

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Theodore Ozawa

Theodore Ozawa, eldest of six children, was born in 1932, in Wahiawa, Kaua'i, Hawai'i.

His parents were immigrants from Yamanashi-*ken*, Japan. His father, Yoshikiyo Ozawa, a Soto Mission minister whose Buddhist name was Gijo, arrived with his wife, Hanako, to assume the position of minister at Zenshuji in Wahiawa, Kaua'i, in 1931.

Besides meeting the religious needs of the Japanese community at surrounding McBryde Sugar Company plantation, the Ozawas filled educational and cultural needs. Yoshikiyo Ozawa served as principal of the Japanese-language school; Hanako Ozawa served as a classroom teacher and instructor in sewing and flower arrangement. Yoshikiyo Ozawa also organized classes in martial arts.

With the outbreak of war, Yoshikiyo Ozawa was removed from the minister's residence on December 7, 1941. Initially held at a facility on Kaua'i, he was later moved to Sand Island Detention Center and to the U.S. Mainland.

The Ozawa family—Hanako and four children, Theodore, Donald, Gordon, and Clara—were placed in Jerome War Relocation Center in early 1943. Separated from their father who was held in facilities elsewhere, including Camp Livingston, Louisiana, they were not reunited until all were sent to Tule Lake Segregation Center, California in summer 1944. There, Yoshikiyo Ozawa worked in an office while Hanako Ozawa helped in the mess hall. Their fifth child, Walter, was born at Tule Lake.

Allowed to return to the islands in 1945, the Ozawas returned to Zenshuji where they remained until they were transferred to Taiyoji on the island of O'ahu in 1951.

Theodore Ozawa, who earned degrees at the University of Hawai'i, taught at Willamette University until his retirement in 1994. He has two children and one grandchild.

Tape No. 57-15-1-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Theodore Ozawa (TO)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

October 8, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto

MK: This is an interview with Theodore “Ted” Ozawa. This is session number one on October 8, 2012. We’re in Honolulu, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i, and the interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. So, good morning.

TO: Good morning.

MK: Thank you for making time for us.

TO: I thank you for doing all that research and stuff. People need to know (past history) you know.

MK: As I said before, we’re going to start with the very beginning. Like what year were you born?

TO: I was born in 1932.

MK: Where were you born?

TO: I was born in Wahiawa, Kaua‘i, which is a plantation community run by McBryde Sugar Company, [Ltd.] and it was located between present Hanapēpē—well ‘Ele‘ele is right near. ‘Ele‘ele, Port Allen, and Kōloa—between ‘Ele‘ele and Kōloa. The sugar plantation.

MK: We were curious first about your mother. What was your mother’s name?

TO: Hanako. They got married in Japan in 1931. They moved to Kaua‘i where I was born in 1932.

MK: Before they came to Kaua‘i, where was your mom?

TO: My mom and my dad, they were both from Yamanashi-*ken* [prefecture], which is in the foothills of Mount Fuji. She had gone to college and graduated, which was unusual. She was a teacher. I think she—well just stories as I can remember my mother telling me—she fell in love with my dad who was a training minister in the Buddhist church. He used to come and bring the messages to the local Buddhist church. That’s where they met.

My mother was supposed to marry a son of a businessman. Kind of rich family I guess. But, she didn’t like that. So she ran away to Tokyo to avoid that, to be with her brother, who was a businessman in Tokyo; and lived with him for a while where she worked as a saleslady. She used to say she used to struggle. She didn’t know anything about cash or (registers) collecting money from sales and so forth. I guess she got used to it, and they got married (soon after.) My dad was transferred to Kaua‘i to be the minister at the church in Wahiawa, Kaua‘i.

He was probably the third minister to service the plantation community. There were two ahead of him. The reason I can remember is (from) pictures of the previous ministers on the (church) wall.

MK: I was wondering, what kind of background did your mother come from? Your maternal grandmother, grandfather?

TO: They had a really large family too. I don't remember what they did. I remember going back to Japan, probably at the age of four. I remember going on the ship, some Japanese something-*maru*. (Chuckles) They were all named something-something-*maru*. I remember even some of the big *furo* on the ship. We used to jump in and swim in the pool and I remember my kid brother was running around on deck because the adults were all seasick right? (TO and MK laugh.) Just running around. I often wonder if anybody (had fallen) over the side of the boat, because it wasn't that protected, it seems, like for the children anyway. But we got there okay.

I think while we were there my great-grandparent—grandfather I guess—passed away. So they had a funeral and I remember recalling the odd smell because we went to where they incinerated the body. Afterwards we're picking through the ashes for things. I didn't even think about death and all that because I didn't know that, but I remember the smell and picking up the (bone) pieces in the incinerator.

We were running through the family's house where we stayed. I remember running around the river with a lot of pebbles. So these are the things I remember, but other than that my mother used to say they used to take us to the zoo. I remember she saying this, but I don't remember the incident. But she said (there was) a big bear or something and I just ran away because I was so afraid. They were frantically looking for me—(her) sisters—because they were nervous. At that time they were saying (bad people are) going to steal children to ship to Korea or someplace else. She was all worried. They found me at the aquarium with my head stuck on the glass looking at the fish. But I don't really remember that. I remember going to the zoo but I don't remember that incident.

MK: That was in Japan?

TO: In Japan. In Japan.

MK: You mentioned that your mom went through college in Japan.

TO: Right.

MK: How about her siblings? Were they as well-educated?

TO: Yes, I think her brother was pretty well-educated, because he was working for one of the big companies—I can't remember the name, but it's in the level of Mitsui Company or Mitsubishi. I can't remember the name but he moved up to be the vice president of the company, so he was well-educated.

The older sister, I remember was an artist. She was designated one of Japan's treasures—they designate certain outstanding people "Treasures of Japan." Good artist. That's about all I remember.

MK: For your father, what was your father's name?

TO: My father's name was Yoshikiyo Ozawa. I think he was (adopted) into the Ozawa family because they probably didn't have a boy in the family to take over the church. I guess---I don't hear too much about his background. But that, I remember—(Mom) telling me that.

MK: We know that he was a minister for a Buddhist temple.

TO: Yes, Sōtō Buddhist Church.

- MK: What have you been told about his early days in Japan?
- TO: The only thing that I can recall, he was in the military because at that time, all the men had to serve in the Imperial Army or whatever. That's about all I heard. He must have been an officer, because he was one on the FBI's lists. Any officers in the military service in Japan were identified already (before Dec. 7th).
- MK: You mentioned that he might have been adopted into the Ozawa family.
- TO: Yes. I did meet—when I went to Japan—his sister. The sister was running a small tobacco shop. Like a hole-in-the-wall kind of tobacco shop. That's the only person I remember when we went to visit all the families. I remember my mother's side because we always visited with my mother's side.
- MK: I was wondering too, since your father was a minister, had he come from a family that had a tradition in being ministers?
- TO: I'm not sure about that. Not sure about that.
- MK: What have you heard about your father's education or training?
- TO: He went to the Buddhist university. Komazawa? I can't remember the name of it. It's a Buddhist university and they still exist today I think. But the name slips my mind. (Chuckles)
- MK: Your mom and dad, they eventually got married in Japan. Once they got married, is that . . .
- TO: Yes, that's when they came over (to Hawai'i). So I think it was soon after they got married.
- MK: What had you heard about their coming over to Hawai'i in 1931?
- TO: Not much. I guess---I don't remember their having any struggle or anything like that. 'Cause they were traveling back and forth, and Japanese ships were coming back and forth, bringing immigrants—immigrant workers and all that. So I don't remember any stories about their coming over.
- MK: How about any stories about their first impressions of Hawai'i?
- TO: I think my father was kind of open-minded and he just accepted whatever the situation was. I remember in a plantation camp there were about—I'm guessing—about two hundred plantation homes. We were living way up in the north end of the camp, because the minister was still in the church and at the church residence. I think I was born in that home. We had midwives who came to deliver the kids over there. I do remember the home later on. They told me—they pointed it out, "That's where you were born."
- MK: We call you Theodore or Ted.
- TO: Yes.
- MK: What name were you born with back then?
- TO: At that time I was speaking Japanese. Japanese was my first language. They used to call me by my first Japanese name, Yūko. Later on, they started to call me, "Teddy, Teddy, Teddy, Teddy." That's easier to say than Theodore right? (TO and MK laugh.) So I grew up as Teddy. Even my sister in college used to call me Teddy all the time. So I (later) stopped them. "My name is Ted!"

(Laughter)

- MK: How did you end up with “Theodore?”
- TO: Well, I think my father was impressed with Theodore Roosevelt. That’s where the name came from. That’s what he told me anyway.
- MK: Once the family was settled on Kaua‘i, prior to the war, who made up the family? Your mom, your father, yourself . . .
- TO: And we had as I showed you a picture, there were four of us. The youngest one was born in 1939, so just before the war. So when we went into the relocation camp I remember carrying her and all that. Since I was the eldest I was sort of taking care of the kids. My mother was always busy with church activity. My dad, he was always busy with the church too.
- MK: So the kids at that time would be your brother Donald?
- TO: Donald.
- MK: And your brother Gordon?
- WN: Gordon.
- TO: Gordon.
- MK: And your sister . . .
- TO: Clara.
- MK: . . . Clara.
- TO: Right.
- MK: Describe for us if you can the house that you lived in on Kaua‘i.
- TO: The place I was born is a real plantation camp [house] with the boards with spaces [in between]. They never had—what do you call—fillers to fill in the space. Then we (later moved) to the church and there was a building that was attached to the temple. That’s where the minister’s residence was. You come in to the front and there’s a hallway that goes to the church. The living room is there. Then the kitchen, or dining room and kitchen. Then the bedroom was on (the right) side, so we all slept in one room basically. The *furo* was outside, so we used to go out to take a bath. Since my mother was so busy I think we were kind of handed over to other people to take care of us, so I remember one of (them, the) Horikawa family was sort of like my nanny. So we always used to go to her house. Then I remember (it as) one of the plantation homes. They had a pigeon. . . .
- MK: Coop?
- TO: Coop. They used to have a lot of pigeons, so we used to go and feed the pigeons and all that. Right across her home was the midwives’ home. The Kuboyama family. We used to always treat her like my grandmother I guess, because she had older kids.
- MK: So you folks spent time with the Horikawa family.
- TO: Horikawa.
- MK: Horikawa?
- TO: Yes, Horikawa.
- MK: H-O-R-I? Okay. Horikawa family. And the Kuboyamas?

- TO: Kuboyamas were---I had a classmate who was same age with me, so we used to play together. But I don't remember going to the house as much as I went to the Horikawa family.
- MK: You mentioned that your actual family residence was attached to the temple.
- TO: Attached to the temple. It was more in the central part of the community.
- MK: The temple itself, what was it called?
- TO: Zenshuji.
- MK: Zenshuji.
- TO: It was really a typical Japanese-type structure. With a sloping [roof] and all the ornaments and all that. There was some veranda-like around the church and a sliding door with a *shoji* door like. I remember kids used to poke holes in them. We used to always have to replace (chuckles) paper.
- MK: So you folks were repairing *shoji* doors?
- TO: Well, I remember people having to repair that. It was a thin cloth I guess. Maybe it was paper in the beginning. Then I remember when I was growing up I have to go to sweep and mop the veranda because it got pretty dusty in a plantation community.
- MK: What did the grounds of the temple look like?
- TO: The ground was---they had a lawn and they had a pond right next to the temple. We used to feed the *koi* that lived in the pond. There was a big vine-covered tree. Well, (a dead tree trunk covered with overgrown vines), maybe. Just really nice. I have some pictures of that in the album. The yard was pretty good with what they call *shiba* bushes that sort of blocked off the front part of it. In front of that was a big yard and there was a big monkeypod tree. (The yard) was big enough to play softball in the field. Next to the temple was a hall. Across the hall was a building for the Japanese-language school.
- MK: The hall itself? What was that used for?
- TO: They used to have movies—Japanese movies. (The film) would come and there was a projection room upstairs, I remember. There was a guy who would come with a *shamisen* and they would play the *shamisen* and he would (speak) the words of the actors. They were acting and they (voiced) a lady's part or the men's part. So, it was (really) a silent movie actually.
- MK: So the hall was used for movie showings?
- TO: Movies. And then they had *kendō* in there. They had judo on the stage. More on the stage area because the floor of the (hall) was cement so I don't think we had (judo there)—but they had *kendō* in there. I remember having boxing classes in there too. Later on they had the Y [Young Men's Christian Association] program that came and did a lot of Y programs. Cooking for the boys and all that kind of [activities], after the war. I think that was after the war.
- MK: When you say Y, is that YBA [Young Buddhists Association] or YMCA?
- TO: YMCA.
- MK: YMCA after the war. You mentioned they had like *kendō*, judo. Who sponsored those activities there?

- TO: I think it was the church members. They were like---the *kendō* I remember [Gyokuei Matsuura] the assistant minister. He was (into) *kendō*. He had even archery in his backyard. I remember doing archery too.
- MK: Now you mention an assistant minister. How many ministers were there?
- TO: After (my dad) was sent there, then the assistant minister came. . . .I'm not sure how long after my dad was there, that they got an assistant minister, because the community expanded and he used to service the whole island, basically. I think they needed an assistant minister, so he came. He later was transferred—after the war—to Hilo and then to Kona. Later on became the bishop.
- MK: Oh, that's Matsuura-sensei.
- TO: Matsuura-sensei.
- MK: Okay. You mentioned what the grounds looked like. Did you folks have like a garden or any livestock or anything like that for your family?
- TO: In the back of the house there was space. I think during the (post World War II years) we used to grow beans and vegetables in the back. But, we were so young, we were not good enough to raise all the good stuff. (MK laughs.) So the people used to bring (veggies, chicken, eggs, fish, etc.), but it's mostly after the war (that) we started growing a lot of vegetables.
- MK: You mentioned the grounds, and beyond the grounds what was the neighborhood like?
- TO: The temple is here, the hall is here, the Japanese school is here, and the whole area was a field. There was a building here that I'm not sure if that probably came out during the war. The Christian church had its service right there. Because (we) didn't have enough Buddhist services, I think the Christian minister came. And I remember playing with (his) kids too.
- The other side of the field was the temple bell. My dad used to ring the bell every morning at five o'clock or whatever the time. I think it was five o'clock. People usually used that as a signal to get up and get to work. They left at five, I'm not sure what time they (were picked up in the truck to go to the fields). In the evening. I remember when I got older I could ring the bell. At the New Year's service they would ring the bell so many times. Us boys would go up and take turns ring the bell (for the number of beads on the *o-ju-zu*, rosary). I can't remember how many—one hundred and eight. I can't remember what the number was.
- MK: Around the temple were there houses close by?
- TO: The houses were in the back of it, and then all the way back. In front of the bell was a sort of like a gulch. That's where the stream flowed. I remember having to go down and chop the wood to bring back to start the *furo*. You go down. Got to get wood. Koa wood, basically. They burn pretty fast. We used to go down and play in the—we used to call them "Down *Kawa*." It was just a stream. Our parents—I think my mother—didn't want us going down there. (TO and MK laugh.) Well, I guess (they) accepted that we were going (down) to cut the wood we had to bring (them) back. Then if you follow the stream all the way down (to the beach) for about a mile-and-a-half or two is the ocean already (we did it). We used to go down during the summer months. Go all the way down and play on the beach. All the kids. All together. No adult supervision. I was surprised.
- MK: The neighborhood around the temple grounds, was it predominantly Japanese?
- TO: Oh yes. Predominantly Japanese. Mostly the plantation workers. At one time long ago I could remember who lived in each house. But I can't remember now. About two hundred homes. There were some new buildings way on the east side. They were of the more

(recently built) homes. The one below the hill was Kimata Store. That was a local store and there was a barbershop down there.

MK: Now you've mentioned there is an area where you had stores. The barber. Kimata Store. What else did you have nearby in terms of a . . .

TO: That was probably (it), let's see—probably about six rows of houses and then it goes down the hill and they were down at the bottom of the hill. Below that there was another camp. They call it Camp Two. They were predominantly Filipino. If you go further down there were the Stable Camp, they call it, where they kept the donkey and the mule to do the pulling of all the carts. If you go all the way down to the ocean (that) was Camp One. We used to call it Beach Camp One. We used to always go down to Camp One, we used to say (to swim and play).

MK: The place where you lived, was there a camp name?

TO: (Wahiawa) Camp Three. That was a Camp Three.

MK: Camp Three.

TO: So [Camp] One, Two, Three. Then there were probably Six, Seven, Eight. And I remember Camp Nine was by the mill—sugar mill. So they had camps throughout the (sugar) plantation.

MK: Your father was a *Sōtō-shū* minister. In Hawai'i, many of the temples are of the Hongwanji. So, were there other Buddhist temples?

TO: Not nearby. There was probably a Hongwanji in Kapa'a—east side. (In) Waimea, I don't remember a Hongwanji over there. I think there were some small Shinto temples around, but I don't remember those.

MK: So, in terms of their religious affiliation, the Japanese in that camp where the temple was, they were mostly . . .

TO: Mostly Buddhists.

MK: . . . Buddhists.

TO: *Sōtō* Buddhists.

MK: *Sōtō-shū* Buddhists.

TO: (My dad) used to service the people from Hanapēpē and 'Ele'ele and some of the other camps. We used to even go out to Kapa'a side which is quite a ways away.

MK: It is, yeah?

TO: And Waimea. I remember going out to Waimea too.

MK: As a *Sōtō-shū* minister—Buddhist minister, what were the duties that your father had to fulfill?

TO: I think he was principal of the Japanese-language school. My mother was one of the teachers in the Japanese school. I think my mother taught sewing and flower arrangement and other things for the ladies. I guess my father organized all the other activities like judo [and] *kendō* in the beginning. Until the assistant minister came and he kind of did some of the *kendō* and other things. They recruited some local teachers. Younger men who had judo in Japan or whatever. Even the second-generation boys, they were older than I am and they could do some of the teaching.

- MK: To what extent was your father involved in the *kendō* and the judo?
- TO: I don't remember him getting (involved)—he was involved in the Japanese-language school. That was a pretty big organization. There were maybe about six or seven classrooms. So it was a big outfit. He would get the Japanese school teachers.
- MK: As minister, I'm curious about what does a Buddhist minister do?
- TO: Well, in Japan the Buddhist minister handles all the funeral services and take care of the family who going through the grieving process too. So I remember he had to console the family and so forth, so he traveled quite a bit.
- MK: When it came to. . . .
- TO: Weddings, I think in Japan the weddings were done mostly in the Shinto shrine, but I think they did weddings at the Buddhist church too.
- MK: At the time your father was a minister on Kaua'i, were there such things as a Sunday school?
- TO: Oh yes. We had Sunday school and every Sunday we used to go. He used to have the teachers organize that and he would have the service in the morning and break up into groups.
- MK: I've noticed in some Buddhist temples, there's singing and. . . .
- TO: Oh yes. We learned all the songs. (Chuckles) The Buddhist songs. The chants. Chants and all that. He used to have (us do) meditation. *Zazen*. I think the Zen Buddhists had meditation. So I remember having to sit. You know with the (legs folded under you), and then you sit down quietly and try to do meditation. If you did move or you're not concentrating or (too relaxed), you get a hit on the back. (Chuckles)
- MK: When it came to times like *O-shōgatsu* [Japanese New Year]. . . .
- TO: Oh yes. They had all the big—always the big ones. *Shōgatsu*. *Hanamatsuri*. *Obon* service. *Obon* service you got to do all the *Obon* things. *Bon* dance over there and all that. In the fall there was a big one, I can't remember the name of it now. They had all those all year round.
- MK: How large do you think the congregation was before the war?
- TO: Oh boy. I can't even put a number to it but the church services were all filled.
- MK: It's big.
- TO: It wasn't that big a church compared to now, but it was all full.
- MK: You mentioned *O-shōgatsu*, what would happen at *O-shōgatsu*?
- TO: Well, they would start almost like at midnight. We have to start ringing the bell at midnight and then a big service. Everybody would come. They always had *mochi* pounding before that. Getting ready for the *Shōgatsu*. They used to have the community ladies come to prepare all the food, so anytime there was a big gathering they always had good food at the church. Servicing the hall, line up the tables, put all rows of tables with wrapping paper to cover them and to serve everybody. So it was a pretty big deal.
- MK: I know that nowadays we have like *Shinnenkai*. How about in those days?
- TO: *Shinnenkai*, yes. They had the YBA, SYBA. Sōtō YBA members.

MK: *Seinenkai*?

TO: Yes.

MK: *Seinenkai*. Then how about *Shinnen enkai*? The year-end party?

TO: We had year-end parties. They always used to have that too.

MK: What would happen at those parties?

TO: I can remember all the good food. (TO and MK laugh.) I think they used to have some stage show and entertainment too at that time. But I was a kid just running around. We don't pay attention to those adults things.

MK: You mentioned *Hanamatsuri*.

TO: Yes, *Hanamatsuri*. They used to have *Shichi-go-san* services. They used to all dress us up with the certain outfit. I remember having a picture of all the kids in that kind of clothes. I think it was *Shichi-go-san*. Looking back at that time we just go with the flow and do whatever the parents say. So they did a lot of Japanese festivals.

MK: How about like Boys' Day or Girls' Day?

TO: They had Boys' Day and Girls' Day.

MK: That too?

TO: And they used to have display of the dolls and stuff. Not quite as elaborate as they do now, but because the dolls are not that. . . .

MK: For you folks where you have three sons, was Boys' Day a big thing?

TO: I don't remember any particular incident, but we always participated in all the activities anyway. So just part of growing up. I didn't even know it was *Shichi-go-san* until later on, "Oh, that's what it was." (Laughs)

MK: They dressed you up and everything. You folks had like Sunday services. . . .

TO: Yes. Sunday services in the morning and then they had Sunday school for the kids. I think they had older people coming up. Ladies, older ladies, used to connect the stories about Buddhism and all that. In a simplified form of course.

MK: You also mentioned that your father was principal of the Japanese-language school. What was the name of that Japanese-language school?

TO: He wrote a book about the Japanese-language schools in Hawai'i. It was about that, all written in Japanese.

MK: Oh, okay.

TO: I thought I donated one of the books to the library, but I have no idea if it's still there.

MK: So it would. . .

TO: It was run quite formally. I think they had contacted the other Japanese-language schools all over the island so they used to have conferences, meetings, and all that. They had about, four, five teachers. I don't remember the number, but I remember going to school and there were in several classrooms. And each grade level going up.

MK: In those days, how would you describe your father's role in the family?

TO: He was so busy that I think the only time I would face him was when we did something wrong and my mother couldn't handle it. He was---he would get us. (Chuckles) Put us in our places. But I think my mother did a lot of the discipline I guess, but my dad came in when it was required.

(Laughter)

MK: So he was a disciplinarian.

TO: Oh, yes. He was always very strict, like in a Japanese tradition. My second brother was always getting into trouble. (TO and MK laugh.) My third brother was so small, and he was always out of it kind of looking in. (When my second brother) and I argued with my mother or somebody, he would be the one that would kind of rebel the most. He was the rebellious one I guess.

MK: You've spoken a little bit about your mother's role. She was a teacher in the Japanese-language school.

TO: And she was kind of in charge of the *fujinkai*. They did sewing classes for the young ladies after English [public] school or sometimes evenings. She was (always) busy. That's why we were with the nanny. I didn't know (she) was nanny, but that was our nanny, I guess.

MK: Besides teaching sewing, were there other things that your mom taught?

TO: Well, she was receptionist at the house. I remember having to keep the parlor reception—as you walk right in—clean all the time. Nothing on the floor. People used to come and she used to sit down and serve tea and cookies or whatever. She was always busy.

MK: So she had to deal with *okyakusan* and. . . .

TO: And the *fujinkai* and the ladies group. We had---I don't think they had *go-ekai* at that time, but she helped the ladies *fujinkai*. Get them organized for the parties and special occasions and so on.

MK: Because your father was a minister and Japanese-school principal, and your mother was a Japanese-language school teacher and cultural teacher and wife of the minister . . .

TO: She was always busy.

MK: What was their involvement in other things among the Japanese?

TO: Involvement in terms of. . . .

MK: Say with the consulate or the larger Japanese community of Kaua'i?

TO: I think my father was more into that.

MK: Your father. . . .

TO: My mother was (mostly) trying to keep the community people happy, and I'm sure she was counseling a lot of the families too, in terms of their kids growing up. She must have been doing that too, because every time one of us kids would react, they would come running to my mother. So, she knew everything.

(Laughter)

We could not misbehave outside. My mother said, "Don't even pick up a cigarette, because they're going to think you're smoking."

(Laughter)

MK: Oh no. I was curious, some ministers or teachers had dealings with the Japanese consulate, because they were literate and everything. How about your dad?

TO: I think my dad was probably helping them with a lot. I'm not sure where the office was in Līhu'e. But he was always busy so I couldn't even trace where he was.

MK: You mentioned that your father served in the Japanese military prior to coming to the islands. Did he have any contact with Japanese navy men or others?

TO: Well, every time the Japanese navy ship would come to Pearl Harbor, there would be a big deal but I don't think they came to Kaua'i. They must have stopped in Nāwiliwili. (Laughs) I don't remember that so much, but I remember—was it after the war?—that we used to go down to greet the ship and all that.

MK: Now I'm curious about your life. You've kind of told us a little bit about what it was like. What was it like growing up as a minister's son, schoolteacher's son?

TO: Well, the pressure was there on me I tell you. We had to behave properly. I go to tell my friend, "Let's go out to play."

And the mother is scolding the boy says, "Look at the *otera no* boy, he finished all his work and clean (the yard) before he's going out to play. You didn't do anything."

They used to point to me as what they should be doing, like what I do. Oh gosh, it was pressure. Even as a kid I (went) through that pressure.

MK: What was expected of you at the *otera* in terms of your chores or responsibilities?

TO: Well, every morning I had to get up, because I'm the eldest and my kid brothers were younger, and to sweep and mop the floor. I remember after the war helping paint the church because it was kind of dilapidated, so I remember climbing the temple roof and painting the (very) top. I said, "God, I was up there?" That was kind of dangerous. (Chuckles) But the carpenters and painters, they allowed me to go up and help them paint and do different things. I think that I felt more of the expectation (rather than) pressure. My brother felt it too, and he rebelled more than I did, so he was getting all the scolding all the time. My third brother was young enough. He was oblivious.

MK: Also, being the eldest, to what extent were you responsible for your younger siblings?

TO: I did a lot of cooking, ironing, and washing clothes. I did a lot of that when I was growing up. We used to have a tub that we boiled our clothes. Clothes were all red dirt so we always have to boil and take it out. Scrub (them with a firm brush). The knees and the back. I did a lot of those things.

MK: I didn't ask you, in those days did the minister's residence have electricity and modern conveniences?

TO: Yes, we had electricity, but the water I remember was cold. The only hot water we had in the evening when I heated up the *furo*. The stove was kerosene, so they used to deliver kerosene stove (fuel) so you cook everything on the kerosene stove. The refrigerator was an ice box. They delivered ice and you put it on the bottom and to keep some of the things in there. The tofu ladies would come. I don't think we had milk delivered. I don't remember drinking milk. I was not a milk drinker.

MK: So as a kid, you had a lot of duties. Other kids weren't expected to sweep and mop.

TO: Oh no, no. Then raking the yard. Oh my goodness. The bushes always drop leaves and we have to keep the yard always clean. (We had) visitors always coming, so we got to

keep it nice. We had a yardman who did the pruning and the grass—mowing the lawn with a push mower and all that. But the leaves, (I had) to rake (them).

MK: You worked hard. (MK and TO laugh.) Because you're at the temple and you have the congregation members would come, what was that like to be among a group of congregation members? They must have treated you a certain way.

TO: Oh yes, they did. I was their *botchan*. (Laughs)

MK: Can you explain that? What you mean by?

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

TO: You asked me about *botchan* and I was thinking, "Now where did that name come from?" I think it's a Kaua'i language—you know *bāchan*, *nīchan*. They used to call me *nīsan*—I was the oldest so you know *onīchan*. *Botchan* I think it's a combination of "boy-*chan*". *Botchan*, *botchan*.

(Laughter)

WN: I don't think it's just Kaua'i though.

TO: Is that right?

WN: I think it's a Japanese term.

MK: Japanese term.

TO: I didn't know where they come from though.

MK: *Botchan*. Yeah, it's a very. . . .

TO: What word is *bot-chan*? *Chan*, I know *chan*. But where does *bot* come from?

(Laughter)

I was thinking "boy."

MK: Usually said with affection. *Botchan*.

TO: Yes. It's an affectionate term. It is an affectionate term.

MK: So you were known as the *otera no botchan*.

TO: Yes. (TO and MK laugh.)

MK: In terms of the ministerial duties, say your father doing things in the temple itself, were you ever involved in that kind of thing?

TO: Well, in the preparation of New Year's (we) had to clean everything, so we're cleaning the *butsudan* and cleaning out the ashes from the incense bowls. Get all the pieces out. We did a lot. Dusting the *butsudan* shelves. It was pretty well-ornated. If I remember, they had hangings of some of the old almost Indian-type (hangings). Goes back, way back, so they had some of the scrolls over there. The curtains-like thing that hung over there. But they have yearly cleanup and all the people came to clean up the church and all that. I remember being part of that too.

MK: When it came to like services, were you as a young boy asked to . . .

TO: I was too young to be part of the service. Although my mother wanted me to learn (to play the) organ, so I started taking lessons on the church organ. But, the war came, so that ended it all.

MK: What school did you go to?

TO: I went to 'Ele'ele School, which is about I would guess a mile-and-a-half or two, but to me when I was young that was a long walk. We used to walk every morning and come back after school, and run back so I can get to the Japanese-language school.

MK: When you look back on 'Ele'ele School, what sorts of kids went to that school?

TO: We had all the people from the camp came. Then, some from 'Ele'ele, Hanapēpē, from the surrounding. . . . So when I first went to school, my first language was Japanese. So, my first-grade teacher was Chinese. Mrs. Ching. I remember an incident where I'm telling a teacher I want to go to the bathroom because it's in kind of a long hall and the bathroom was around the end, and we're in the building. I'm telling the teacher in Japanese I want to go to bathroom, and she doesn't understand. So, my classmate said, "He wants to go bathroom." So I go running up and I didn't quite make it to the bathroom.

(Laughter)

That was kind of embarrassing.

MK: So Japanese was your first language then?

TO: Yes. Japanese was my first language.

MK: And you didn't. . . .

TO: Well, we spoke pidgin among boys but I think they understood Japanese too, so I'm sure they understood what I was saying. Mixed in with their English with my poor English anyway. As I got older, the teachers used to always get after me, saying, "You better teach your brothers how to read. Your brothers (need to learn) how to read." Because I remember going to school and my mother sitting me down and getting a book and said, "Read" in Japanese. She didn't understand a word of English. "Read, read." So I used to just read (aloud) to her. That's how it went.

MK: You were mentioning first grade. Was there also a kindergarten?

TO: No, I don't remember kindergarten. We were in first, second, third, and. . . .

MK: So you had a Mrs. Ching, first grade.

TO: Yes, Mrs. Lyon was second grade. I don't remember the third- and fourth-grade teacher. Fourth grade, well my fourth grade I was on the Mainland the second half of fourth grade.

MK: What were your feelings toward English school?

TO: It was just part of growing up. Everybody had to go to school, so we went to school. Everybody have to go back (after English school) and go to Japanese school, so we just did that. Every summer we went down to the beach and played a lot. Swimming. And when I think about it, I said, "Gosh, there was no adult supervision," and we were about a mile-and-a-half or two miles away and we're just playing on the beach with the waves and everything else. I was surprised.

MK: You mentioned going to the beach. What other things did you do for fun?

- TO: Well, we had baseball in the yard and we used to get a broom handle and tennis ball. Used tennis ball as baseball. You would throw the ball and try to hit it with a (broom handle)—we played baseball like that.
- MK: Oh, my goodness.
- TO: When you threw a tennis ball, you can really make it curve. (Laughs) Not like a regular ball. (Someone begins playing piano.)
- MK: Are we okay?
- WN: Maybe we should go down that side?
- MK: Yes, okay. Let's pause.
- (Taping stops, then resumes.)
- MK: So, we were just talking about what you did for fun. Like, you went to the beach, you played baseball.
- TO: Played baseball.
- MK: With tennis ball. (Laughs)
- TO: A tennis ball. And we used to play a lot of the kid's games. You get a broom handle and you cut a piece kind of slant. So they all were slant slant. You put it on the rock—on a hole. Then you hit the ball—you hit the piece of stick—and that'll fly up. You try to hit it and see how far we can (hit) it. So there was a competition. I forgot . . .
- WN: *Peewee* right?
- TO: I don't think there was a name. There wasn't any name like that.
- WN: It was called *peewee* right?
- TO: It was just hit the (chuckles) . . . I don't know what we called it at that time.
- WN: Oh, okay.
- TO: That was the kind of fun we did. Baseball. Later on we played basketball because they put a basketball court in the yard in front of the church. So we played basketball.
- MK: Yeah?
- TO: Yes. And we used to---later on—that I was older—when I played baseball in the field (near) Camp Nine we used to go to the ballpark. There was a big ballpark. So we played and I think it was part of the American Legion team. We used to play there.
- MK: When we would speak to other people, they would mention maybe going into outdoors and they would do a lot of picking of things like guava or *liliko'i* or mountain apple, how about you?
- TO: Well yes, we did a lot of that too. When we were kids, they told us not to go down to the (Down *Kawa*) or gulch. We used to go fishing for minnows while we (went) to the reservoir which was in the cane field. We used to go swimming over there and fish for minnows and what they used to call, the *dojo*. We used to do that kind of stuff.
- MK: Was that just for fun or you folks brought it home to eat?
- TO: Oh just for fun. No, not to eat. (Laughs)

MK: Not to eat?

TO: Just for fun. We would bring them home in a can and then I don't know what we did to it after that.

MK: You said you folks would go swimming in the reservoir?

TO: Yes, the reservoir used to have ditch that transported the water from the mountain all the way to the field. So the ditch was wide enough that we could swim in the ditch. So, we used to go swimming in there. If nobody's around we're swimming naked because we didn't want to go home and get caught with wet pants. "Oh, you went swimming!" (And got scolded.)

(Laughter)

When we went to the beach, we all had swim trunks, because I think there were girls. Girls used to come too. I didn't even remember.

MK: How did you learn to swim?

TO: At the beach. So when I went to UH [University of Hawai'i] swimming (classes) the coach said, "That's not how you swim," so we got to learn how to (properly) swim. Breathe and so we would just swim. . . .

WN: Oh, dog paddle.

(Laughter)

TO: We're kicking but not timing ourself. You know, "One, two, three. One, two, three." So, I learned to swim after I went to college. Well, the right way to swim.

MK: Main thing you didn't drown.

TO: That's what I said. I thought, "God, there were nobody around. All kids. We're swimming in this ocean and (that's) amazing, when I think about it.

MK: What did your parents do for leisure?

TO: God, I don't think they had leisure time (laughs) . . . they're so busy all the time, I'm telling you.

MK: No leisure?

TO: They're so busy all the time, I'm telling you. That's why we could do a lot of crazy stuff without them even paying attention, because they assumed that one of the ladies would be watching out for us. But we used to go off by ourselves. I (used to) say to my kid brother, "Don't come with us. Don't come with us." Because I got to watch them (laughs) and they were too young for us older boys.

MK: I thought I'd inquire about your parents leisure, because I thought some of the ministers would do *go* or poetry or. . . .

TO: No, they didn't do any of that stuff. I don't remember. I remember learning *go* and the (black and) white rocks. What do they call that? Is that *go*?

MK: *Go*. Yeah, black rocks and white.

WN: The other one.

TO: And Japanese *shuji*.

WN: *Shōgi. Shōgi.*

MK: *Shōgi.*

TO: *Shōgi*, yes. We had even the Japanese card that had names and phrases and kind of matching up like that and you remember.

MK: Oh, *karuta. Karuta.*

TO: Yes, something like that.

WN: *Karuta*, yeah.

MK: But your dad wouldn't be playing *shōgi* or *go* with friends?

TO: No, I don't think---I never saw them play any of that stuff. They were so busy all the time. Seems like to me. Unless when I was out swimming, they were doing some relaxation stuff. Laughs. I don't know. They used to go to the movies of course when the movies came.

MK: When it came to Japanese[-language] school, who were your teachers?

TO: Well, they were---I think my mother was my teacher at one time. I don't remember my dad being my teacher. Maybe he had the upper grades. Then I had some other local ladies who were teaching Japanese-language school. Probably two others. I can't remember the number but. . . .

MK: What were you taught in Japanese-language school?

TO: I think mostly the basic reading. *Katakana*, *hiragana*, and *kanji*. And writing. I don't know what they call it. *Sakubun*?

MK: Mm-hmm [yes]. Composition.

TO: Composition. But I think when I was in relocation center, they got a little more advanced, so we were learning (things) like geography and algebra and history of Japan. That kind of stuff. When I was on Kaua'i we're still second, third grade so we're learning first-, second-, third-grade stuff. And songs, some of the songs in Japanese-language school.

MK: This was in. . . .

TO: Japanese-language school.

MK: In those days, did you have things like *undōkai* or performance-like things at the Japanese-language school?

TO: I think we used to do that at picnics. At the camp picnics. Going down to the beach and we would have the kids race and all of that. Sack races they call it. We used to do some of those.

MK: So even though your mom and dad were not plantation workers, your family participated in activities of the plantation.

TO: Yes. Well, I remember more later, after the war. Before the war, they were so busy I think the camp picnics were not that often—to go down to the beach. Mostly they were organizing the kids to do the races and stuff.

MK: You went.

- TO: There were older kids who organized that too, so you know the *seinenkai* leaders or whatever.
- MK: Oh, I see. I see. In Japanese[-language] school, how did you fare? (Laughs) How did you do?
- TO: Oh. (Chuckles) I had to do well. (MK chuckles.) My mother was after me, got to make sure I did everything right. Yes, she was after me all the time. So, I think I was number one all the time it seems like. I hated that but well, what can you do, you just have to keep on doing that.
- WN: Did you feel more pressure at Japanese[-language] school as opposed to English school?
- TO: Yes, because English school was away, and the only time my parents would get a report is if the teacher would call my mother. Oh gosh yes. Got to do your homework and all that kind of stuff.
- MK: How did the kids treat you?
- TO: I think when I was in the first, second, third grade, we just ran around and didn't even think of treating me differently. I only felt it when the parents kind of used me as an example. Oh gosh. (Chuckles) I would think, "Oh, they hate me." (Laughs)
- MK: Oh no. (Laughs) It's hard yeah?
- TO: Yes, it was hard.
- MK: Now, when the war started you were in fourth grade.
- TO: Mm-hmm [yes].
- MK: Tell us about December 7th, 1941. What are your recollections of that day?
- TO: I remember the first—that night they came. December 7 on the night. Then, my dad went away in the night. Later on when we had the blackout—because we have to do blackout soon after, it seems like soon afterwards. I'm sitting in the bedroom and my mother is sewing and she's crying as I recall. I'm trying to console her, "Oh, don't cry. Don't cry." When I recall that, I say, "God, I was a kid then, and I'm telling my mother don't cry?" Kind of funny, you know? When I think about it.
- Probably about a few days later, we had to find somebody to bring the toothbrush and everything else to the county jail because when my father left, he said, "I want to go get my bag. It's packed with my stuff."
- [They said], "Don't bring anything." They didn't want them to bring anything. So they just went. So then, about two days or three days—I don't know how much later—I remember carrying the bag up to the county jail having somebody drive us, because my mother wasn't a driver. We had a local—one of the congregation members—drive us to the county jail to drop off the stuff. I remember going maybe a couple of times to visit him but I'm not very clear. Could have been the first time and. . .
- MK: Since December 7th was a Sunday . . .
- TO: Sunday, yes.
- MK: . . . that morning, Sunday morning, what was that like on Kaua'i?
- TO: I recall December 7th. I don't know if it was that day or before that, but I remember planes flying overhead with the Japanese zero symbol. We used to wave (at them). But it may have been that was December 7, because they were flying over Kaua'i to get to

- O'ahu and they were flying pretty low from what I saw in the movies and stuff. So I said, "God, maybe that was the time." (Chuckles) After that we're still going to school I think. Then later on we were shipped to Jerome. I remember coming to Honolulu. I don't remember where we stayed. Probably at the immigration center, but that's somebody telling me this, so I kind of. . . .but visually I don't remember that.
- MK: Before we . . .
- TO: I remember going to the boat, riding the boat. It was the *Lurline*, by the way. We went to Oakland, so that, I remember. But, the place we stayed in Honolulu I don't remember.
- MK: You know, before we get to that part, I was wondering about December 7th that night. Try to go back to that night and what can you visualize of what happened that . . .
- TO: Well, my kid brothers were all kind of sleeping already. So, that's about the only thing I remember. My dad going away with the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] guys. Two or three guys, they were kind of tall to me. I was a kid then, so. . . .
- MK: How did you feel then?
- TO: Well, I think I was kind of unaware of what was going on, so what are they doing, I wasn't even thinking about that. 'Cause he used to go out a lot so I thought well, part of his job maybe. I wasn't really aware it was FBI until later on that that's what happened.
- MK: So later on you became more aware of that.
- TO: Yes. More aware.
- MK: If you look back to that time, how did your mom look that night or any . . .
- TO: I think my mother was worried. So, it was probably not that night that I saw her crying, because they had the blackout. So, it wasn't blackout on December 7. It was after that that they put "blackout" in. I remember that particular incident.
- MK: At that time, were your mom and dad conversant in English at all, by [19]41?
- TO: I think my dad was going to Waimea High School [probably postwar] to take English to get citizenship, I think. But, his work got so involved that he didn't quite complete that, so that's why he didn't get his citizenship. My mother, well she didn't understand English at all.
- MK: So you were probably the only one in the family that . . .
- TO: That kind of do both English and. . . . Yes, fourth grade I was able to converse in English and Japanese.
- MK: After your father was taken and he went to Lihu'e county jail, how did the family manage in his absence?
- TO: I think the community kind of—like before—they would support us maybe food and fish and chicken and eggs and vegetables. That's how we were surviving actually. When I look back, I said, "Boy, that was our only source of income really." Except for the church donation, but church donation was minimal. Even at Waipahu they used to collect dues. One year my dad (asked me) to help him with the tax return, so I thought (at that time), "Wow, they sure don't make anything." Before that, it was even worse. But I wasn't aware of money and all that stuff.
- MK: I guess before the war it was more support in-kind.
- TO: Yes, barter (system). Barter and donations.

MK: So you folks were managing?

TO: Yes, I guess so. And that's what I think caused my mother to decide to go (to relocation camp). Some other families, if they could support themselves, they could remain home. But very few could support themselves, so most of the ministers' families went to the Mainland. I think there were a few older civilians that used to support the families so they could probably stay back, but most of the families went to the Mainland.

MK: From what you could notice, you're still a kid.

TO: Yes.

MK: Was the congregation still treating you folks the way they did before?

TO: Yes, I think they were. They were concerned. I could see that. I wasn't in conversation with the church mothers and the people around. Especially the menfolks. The church folks. But I'm sure they had a lot of conversation but I was not part of the conversation.

MK: At that time, to what extent was your family aware of others being taken in?

TO: Oh, we weren't aware. We're not aware. Because all other families just see the community itself. We were still sent to school I guess. But a week after or two, they went back to the normal school and we're just going on like nothing happened. Only my father was gone. The rest of the family that I grew up with, they're still operating as usual.

MK: Like your father was taken to Līhu'e.

TO: Well, it was near the Wailua Golf Course and they call it the county jail, but it was not in Līhu'e, it was by Wailua Golf Course. Before you get to Līhu'e.

WN: Oh, Wailua?

TO: Wailua. Wailua.

WN: Wailua, the golf course.

TO: Yes, right across there.

MK: Wailua Golf Course. What did you folks know about your dad's whereabouts at that time?

TO: I don't think we knew. I don't think my mother knew. I wasn't told if she knew. Even when we went to Arkansas, we didn't know. I didn't know. I don't think my mother knew either.

MK: When your family started getting ready to go to the Mainland, what were you told, if anything?

TO: Yes. Well, I just assumed we have to go. We have to go. I don't know where we're going but we're to go. So, I think there were the church members who came to help and pack. I don't know if we cleaned up the house at all. I don't remember that.

MK: So it was just packing up items.

TO: Yes. Packing up the bag. And then going. That's about all I remember.

MK: Up to that time you don't know if they had much contact with your father?

TO: I don't think they knew. At least I didn't know, and I don't think my mother knew too.

- MK: You were saying that you went from Kaua‘i to Honolulu.
- TO: To Honolulu, and I don’t remember where we stayed. Then we got on the ship—*Lurline*—and then we went to Oakland. I’ve been on a boat before so I kind of maybe confused with the boat. It’s just kind of like a boat ride—five or six days. Then we got into Oakland. Got off the boat and into a train right next to the dock, and headed on out. We had to pull our shades down. Can’t look out the window. Just kept on going. I may have peeked out a little, but there weren’t anything outside, at least I don’t recall anything outstanding.
- MK: What do you remember about the other people that you may have noticed?
- TO: Well, I think the kids were kids. We were running up and down the train. (Chuckles) The older people were quiet.
- MK: How did your mom manage? I mean, she has you, and. . . .
- TO: I remember carrying my sister. [Nineteen] thirty-nine, forty, forty-one. So she was like two years old. I remember carrying her at the dock over here going on the boat. Even on the train I can remember having to carry her because it was quite a walk from the boat to the train and all that. We were carrying suitcases. But that’s all I recall.
- MK: With the child that young, how about things like diapering and feeding and. . . .
- TO: I don’t remember diapers though. She was two, so she may have been toilet trained by then. I don’t remember though. I don’t remember diapers. I remember the diapers earlier. (MK and TO laugh.) On the train and then, I don’t remember diapers.
- MK: You folks—when you were here in Honolulu and on your travel—you folks were just like regular kids?
- TO: Yes, regular kids. It seemed to me like the adults were kind of quiet. Not the usual conversational kind of thing. They were talking but not like for. . . .
- MK: How was your mom through all of this?
- TO: I think she carried herself pretty well. As far as I can recall. She was just a regular mom taking care of the kids, disciplining us, “Sit down!” That kind of stuff.
- MK: So other than that one time when she was crying at home . . .
- TO: Yes, I don’t remember any other incident that was alarming to me.
- MK: I’m wondering, in the postwar—later on—did your mom talk about those days?
- TO: No, I don’t think they talked too much about those days. As I recall, even on the Mainland I was talking to (Professor Linda Tamura) and she said, “They have a hard time getting the people to talk about their experience.” So none of them really wanted to talk about it, and to me their attitude was well, *shikata ga nai*. It happened. Don’t fuss over those things. That was their attitude, I think.
- MK: So, like what you’re sharing with us, it’s basically what you remember.
- TO: Yes, just what I remember. Mom wouldn’t tell us all those kind of stuff. I’m just remembering the things we were doing.
- MK: I’m curious, fourth grade you’re going to be leaving the islands. What did you tell your friends when you were going to go?

TO: I don't even remember having to say goodbye to them. But I know when I came back, I felt like I was a stranger. I felt like I came out of prison and I missed all the fun that my friends went through. Fishing and doing all the fun things the people did on Kaua'i, anyway. So for the longest time I really felt strange. I remember going back to the 'Ele'ele school and the principal cornered me and says, "You're going to be our emcee at the assembly." I don't know if she called it emcee at that time, but I had to read a lot of stuff at the (assemblies and) ceremonies. God, I hated to do that. It was because I spoke "good" English compared to the other people. So I learned pidgin so fast. (Laughs) I practiced pidgin so fast so she won't call me to do that.

By then I graduated and we went to Waimea High School ninth grade. Then I kind of got into the flow of things, but I really didn't feel like I grew up with my friends, so it took me 'till my college freshman year, when I had to write my autobiography. That's when I really let out all my feelings in writing. Huntsberry was this professor's name. And he wrote me back (on my paper with) red marks with all kinds of comments. He must have written about one page of response, or maybe two pages in red ink. I should have kept the letter, but a big F on the front. Too many grammatical errors. That kind of stuff. But what he wrote back to me kind of straightened me out in terms of my attitude. So that helped me get out of that feeling of difference from my friends. (Thought as if) I'm coming out of prison, so I kind of got over that. So I really give him credit for that. But I was a freshman. I was busy working trying to get tuition money to keep in school.

MK: You know, you said when you came back you felt like you came out of prison.

TO: Yes. I'm different and out of place and I came out of prison. That's how I felt. Like I was in prison and I came out, and all my friends out there, and they're having fun. The usual kids stuff. I wasn't part of that because they're all talking about what they did the past four years. Fishing and doing all the fun stuff. But I was never part of that. So that's why I felt like I was coming out of prison. Missed all that fun.

MK: You mentioned that you were asked to be an emcee. Your English was . . .

TO: Yes, that's right, it was . . .

MK: Was your English that much better?

TO: Oh yes. Compared to the people in my class. (Laughs) Oh definitely. Because we were going to English school in the camp and there were volunteer teachers from outside who were *haole* teachers. So, a lot of the—in Tule Lake especially—there were a lot of [U.S.] Mainland Japanese. So their language is a lot more precise than the Hawaiian pidgin, so I kind of picked up that. Although we did have some pidgin words in it, but I think the language is a lot better than (those of) the Kaua'i people.

MK: Going back to the time you folks were leaving the islands. How did you feel?

TO: I don't really recall because it seemed like there were other kids too. Then, I was so busy taking care of my sister and I remember pulling my (youngest) kid brother. He's four or five years younger than I am. My older brother was one year younger and he was more independent, so he can kind of work by himself.

MK: Your brother that's right below you, he wasn't given some of these responsibilities?

TO: Maybe he was. I don't recall. I don't recall.

(Laughter)

WN: He probably recalls. (Laughs)

TO: Yes, he probably recalls more than I do. He's in California right now.

MK: I was wondering, because you basically became the man of the household.

TO: Yes, sort of like . . .

MK: The only one who spoke enough English. So what was that like for you?

TO: I think I was trying to be a disciplinarian to my next brother. He rebelled a lot because Mom always said, "Listen to your older brother" kind of story that goes around all the time. *Nichan no koto*. So I think he rebelled a lot. I remember fighting with him a couple of times but after a while there was no sense, kind of idea. So he went his way and I went my way and we just went along I guess.

MK: You mentioned that the congregation came and helped pack and everything.

TO: I don't remember clearly what they did but we used to have a lot of ladies who used to come and kind of help out. Especially to my mother. For us, we just go around and the usual life.

MK: How were the congregation ladies, how were they reacting to all this?

TO: I guess they felt sorry for my mother. At least that's the impression I got. They were trying to help as much as they can. They were worried. I could see them, they were worried. I didn't hear all the interaction between them—talking to each other.

MK: What did you folks take on the trip to the Mainland?

TO: I think that the clothes which my mother had sewn: our pants, and that kind of stuff. So we went to the [Jerome] relocation camp in Arkansas, and it was cold. It was winter. Damp. And God, we were shivering. We had a potbelly stove and I remember having to light that up and we just dumped the coal in—soft coal—and we didn't know how to start the fire but everybody was saying, "God it's not burning," but once we learned how to get it going that potbelly was red-hot. I remember in the shower room they had one, and my brother was feeling so cold. After shower, he went right up to it and he went against it and singed his rear, bare rear. He was crying. After that he learned not to get too close to the potbelly stove, because it was red-hot, I remember.

MK: When you folks packed up stuff and left . . .

TO: I don't remember packing my own stuff. I think my mother and the helpers kind of packed. We can carry only so many suitcases.

MK: Were there any things of value, sentimental or otherwise that were left?

TO: I don't think so. Well, I don't think we had that many sentimental stuff. It may have been photo albums, maybe. But I don't remember having a photo album in Arkansas. 'Cause (my dad) used to take a lot of pictures. Later on, my mother---somebody must have kept the pictures, because it (included) all the trips, before the war, to Japan. Some of the pictures.

MK: Now that you mention it, what was that trip (to Japan) for when you were real young?

TO: I think that was our first trip to show off—my mother wanted to show the kids to their relatives and I think that's what it was. During the trip, my grandfather died so they had the funeral at that time. We must have been there about a month if I remember correctly.

MK: I noticed in the record that I shared with you, it does mention one trip to Japan of short duration.

TO: Yes. Short duration.

MK: That must be it.

TO: Yes, that must have been. It was probably a trip to show off the children, but we stayed a little longer because of the funeral. And maybe because we went there, because he was sick. Maybe that was it too. I don't remember. I don't remember exactly, because I was four years old maybe. I can't remember.

MK: Warren, should we end right now? It's about 11:25.

WN: Yeah, it's about an hour and a half now.

TO: Oh, okay.

WN: Usually---I hope it went by fast for you.

MK: Yeah, was that . . .

TO: It went pretty fast.

WN: Okay, we'll stop here. Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 57-16-2-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Theodore Ozawa (TO)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

October 17, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mr. Theodore Ozawa. This is session two on October 17th, 2012. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. All set? All set. Okay, we can start.

You know, last time in session one, we covered your family background, your youth. We got you to the beginnings of World War II. We got you on the journey from Hawai‘i to the Mainland. Now we have you at Jerome [Relocation Center]. When you left for the Mainland, first of all how old were you?

TO: Let’s see, I was in the fourth grade, so I would have been ten.

MK: Your youngest sibling—how old was your youngest sibling?

TO: My sister was the youngest and she was born in [19]39, so she was just not quite two yet I think. So, I remember carrying her to the ship and train (chuckles) and we had to carry bags and all the other things.

MK: When your family went to Jerome, who went?

TO: It was my mom, myself, and my brothers Donald and Gordon and Clara. Donald, Gordon, Clara, and myself, with my mother.

MK: When you first got to Jerome, what time of year was it?

TO: It was in the wintertime, and it was cold. I can remember that. (Chuckles) I remember when we had a potbelly stove and we were supposed to start it with soft coal. How to get it started, nobody knew how to start a fire with coals. We just put in papers and pile the coal in and nothing happened. So we needed some wood to start the fire. Once we got it going—we learned the process—then it was okay. I remember even in the community shower we had a potbelly stove, or potbelly stove they called it. I remember it was red-hot, because they had it burning good. My brother Donald was so cold he’s going up against that stove to warm himself, and he sizzled his rear (laughs) and got a little too close. (Made a hiss sound.) I don’t think it was that serious, but you could hear that burning.

MK: When your family went to Jerome, it was just the children and your mother.

TO: Yes, children and my mother.

MK: How did you folks first manage things like getting the potbelly stove started with no guy around?

TO: I think there were some other men around, but they were from Hawai‘i too, so we were trying to start it ourselves like that but I think we learned from our neighbor. It seems like

there was a neighbor whose name I just don't remember, but he was I think a carpenter. I'm not clear about that. I remember going out—later on—out into the swamp area to cut stumps that were in the water to get underneath and get the wood. Peeled the bark, polished it up, and make a nice lamp stand. Really nice. I thought it was really beautiful.

I remember going out into the swampland and seeing moccasin, water moccasin, for the first time. "Hmm, snake," because we never had snakes in Hawai'i. Out in the field they did have rattlesnakes too. I remember some older men catching the snake and getting the hide and put it on the brim of the cap to make it look like a banded strap around the cowboy hat.

MK: What did they do with the rest of the snake?

TO: Oh, they killed the snake first of all so they can peel the skin off and dried it out, then make a band around the hat. I thought that was pretty neat. (MK and TO laugh.) Because we were afraid of snakes. "Don't go near the snakes," (we were told).

MK: When you first got to Jerome, what are your most memorable impressions?

TO: Well, it was cold. I remember it was really cold. Of course the rooms are barracks, so it's not that warm either. I think us kids, we could withstand the cold a lot more than probably the older folks. But even at my age I was cold. We had some military guys that came to visit us. I remember they leaving their jackets and boots so that we could use them because we didn't have shoes that were appropriate for that kind of climate. The big army jacket we were wearing around. The big boots stomping around. I remember that.

MK: I was wondering if you would remember how your mom was taking to all of this.

TO: I think she was recruited, or called upon to serve in the dining room. So they got paid like—I can't remember, the pay was cheap pay—like twelve dollars a month. I can't remember the number. Later on in Tule Lake, my dad was sort of in charge of the administrative group. He got paid a little more. Maybe nineteen dollars a month. I can't remember the exact figure, but it was in that range. So she worked in the mess hall to serve the meals, three meals a day.

The things that I remember, the kids were—the older kids—were really upset. They used to fight a lot, between the [U.S.] Mainland Japanese and the Hawai'i Japanese. I was too young to get involved in that kind of stuff, but I remember running away from (the crowd) when they had a fight. They were throwing knives. I remember pocket knives being thrown, so they were angry. I mean, they were really angry. So that, I remember.

MK: What were some of the conflicts about?

TO: *Kotonks* and Hawai'i Japanese. (Chuckles) I don't even know why they were fighting, first of all. But, later on when I thought about the Hawai'i Japanese and the *kotonks* having the conflicts, (it was) because they spoke differently or just I think anger. They were just releasing their anger, probably.

MK: You mentioned that your mother worked in the mess hall. What would she use her income on?

TO: We were ordering from the Montgomery Ward's catalog we got. So we were getting clothes. Appropriate sort of winter clothes and jackets for the kids and that kind of stuff.

MK: In the camp itself, where could someone go if they wanted to buy something?

TO: I don't remember going to any store, but I imagine they did have some sundries. Things like soap and toothpaste and that kind of stuff, but I don't remember going to any (store). 'Cause we were busy with going to school in the morning. Well, we had exercise in the morning out in the field. We used to do the Japanese kind of exercise. Calisthenics. I

remember doing that, and then going to the regular school. After school we went to the Japanese-language school. We were taught by internees who were teachers before.

MK: You know, this Japanese-language school, was it at Jerome?

TO: At Jerome too.

MK: So, both at Jerome and then later at Tule Lake?

TO: And later at Tule Lake, yes. Tule Lake—my dad was there and his assistant minister from Kaua‘i was there too, and I remember going to his house to learn calligraphy. Japanese calligraphy. All the *kanji*.

MK: I see.

TO: At Jerome—I was kind of young so. . . . I remember going—that was in Tule Lake—seagulls. I was throwing rocks at seagulls. A lot of seagulls around. Jerome was more swampy, muddy I remember. The first time I went, the roads between the barracks were so muddy, but later on they put gravel or something (down and) that made it less muddy anyway.

MK: What were the conditions like in the barracks themselves?

TO: Well, at the barrack we had just one room. We all slept in that one room. I don’t remember if we had *futon*. I just can remember how we slept. (Chuckles) We may have had cots—the army kind of cots. Just on the floor, because we were playing, going to school, and getting tired, sleep. Eat and sleep.

MK: You mentioned like in the community wash area—a bath area—there was a potbelly stove. What else do you remember about the facilities?

TO: I think they had the laundry facility. I imagine I was helping my mother. I used to help my mother when I was on Kaua‘i in washing clothes and all that kind of stuff. I must have done that too. It was just a normal routine I guess. Got to wash the diapers and that kind of stuff. And pants, muddied pants. On Kaua‘i they got red dirt, so boy we had to boil things in a boiling tub and scrub with the brush and then rinse it out and hang it up. I don’t remember hanging things up though, but I kind of recall—later on I guess—they had some lines to hang clothes on. Between the barracks with posts and lines.

MK: Now that you’ve mentioned some of the ways in which you helped your mother, what were some other chores you had at Jerome?

TO: I guess I had to gather the kids and go to meals. That would become a routine thing when my mother was working in the mess hall.

MK: So you were sort of like the supervisor of the younger sibs?

TO: Well, I was doing that even before we went to Jerome.

(Laughter)

It was part of the routine I guess. After we went back to Kaua‘i, they became routine because I had the church stuff (to do).

MK: You mentioned going to school at Jerome. What was it like?

TO: I remember the teacher that I had was a *haole*, and it was a lady that volunteered from outside. She was teaching a class. That’s the only---and then later on there were some local internees who were teachers, so they were doing teaching too. But I don’t recall too much of the classes just going to school. I don’t remember their names even.

- MK: What was the level of teaching, compared to what you experienced on Kaua'i?
- TO: I didn't see much---I didn't recognize any difference. I'm just going to school and learning whatever they said. Probably the books were not quite like what we had in Hawai'i, but reading and all that. Going to elementary school. . . .
- MK: How about the facilities? Like classroom and the chairs and desks?
- TO: Gosh, I don't even recall that. I wonder if we were using the mess hall. But I think there was a separate school. School building. The mess hall was separate, I know, yes. But I don't really clearly recall any outstanding thing. It was just going to a room and going to school.
- MK: What do you recall about your classmates?
- TO: At that time, gosh we were all running around like kids. I don't even remember them. We were playing and doing all the kid stuff, but I don't remember their names or even where they came from. We just played, like kids.
- MK: You kind of talked about the older children having some issues.
- TO: The older children, yes, they were more junior high and high school people and they were older.
- MK: How about you folks?
- TO: I was like fourth grade or fifth grade. The only incident I remember was in junior high school in Tule Lake. There was a teacher who was not very popular. I think it was a *haole* teacher. When she left the room, everybody was standing up and running around and going to the teacher's desk and looking at papers and stuff. (MK and TO chuckle.) Then she came back and everybody's scrambling back to their seat. I remember she caught me by the teacher's desk, so I got a good scolding. I don't remember what she said. I did get a low grade or something. Something like that. I just brushed it off. We were kids messing around.
- MK: You had mentioned that you went to Japanese-language school at Jerome as well as Tule Lake.
- TO: Yes, I think at Jerome we had a Japanese-language school. Not at the very beginning, but later on, maybe after they got established. Half-year, year maybe, I'm not exactly sure. But we did have Japanese-language school. I had gone to Japanese-language school on Kaua'i, so I was about fourth grade and my parents were Japanese school teachers, so I could never give up. I've got to do the best. So, I continued that. The books were not like the one we had in Hawai'i, I just don't remember. I remember writing in tablets—Japanese. At Tule Lake it got a little more serious. Japanese history and mathematics and geography and all that. I remember those.
- MK: You mentioned earlier that you folks used to go out into the swamp area.
- TO: Yes, at that time I don't know how we went out—that was later on, because there were forest around, so I think. . . . I don't remember (how) we went (out) but we just went straight out to the (swamps). I don't even remember the fence. I remember the fence when we first got there, but later on when we went out I don't remember a fence or anything. We just (went) into the swamp and explored. You know, kids explore all kinds of stuff.
- MK: I was wondering, to what extent were your movements . . .
- TO: Monitored?
- MK: . . . observed or. . . .

- TO: Well, I think in the beginning I remember clearly the fence and tower and all that. But then we started to go out, I don't remember how we got out even. Maybe the ones near the swamp area, they probably didn't have guards. We can't run away. (If we) get into the swamp we're going to get bitten by snake or something. There's no place to go. The river is out there and swamp area. Maybe that was it, but I just don't remember going through any gates.
- MK: How about like your mother? When you folks were at Jerome, what opportunities did she have to go outside of the camp?
- TO: I don't think she went out. I don't think so. She was too busy with the household chores and the dining room and that stuff. I remember she was still a disciplinarian, like I remember on Kaua'i. Nothing extraordinary. Our lives just went on. Regular schedule and routines. I don't think we had summer breaks. (Chuckles) At least I don't remember summer breaks.
- MK: With your father not there at Jerome, for your mother were there changes in what she was doing?
- TO: I don't remember any letters or anything like that, but I have a feeling that they did receive letters, because we did receive letters from Hawai'i. Usually they would be censored. Pieces cut out—or I can't remember how they—blacked it out. I don't remember now, I think it was cut out, though. So we did get letters from Hawai'i. I think she did get some money from Hawai'i too, because sixteen dollars or twelve dollars or whatever was not going to buy much. I remember going to the Montgomery Ward's catalog and wanting this and wanting that. I used to think---I think once there was a book on stamp collecting, so I thought, "I just love stamps," so every time a letter came I'd clip off the stamp and managed to save those. That's how I got focused on collecting stamps.
- MK: Your mom's making sixteen dollars . . .
- TO: Or twelve dollars. I don't remember the exact thing, but it was not much.
- MK: And you folks are looking at the catalog.
- TO: Catalog. Yes.
- MK: To what extent did you feel, "we're not good financially" or "we're okay"?
- TO: I never thought about that, because even on Kaua'i we never had lots of money to begin with. It was just all donated stuff. She used to sew a lot, so she used to buy materials. So even in the camp I think she did sew shirts and stuff. I remember my kid brothers, they all want this, and this, and that. I remember they couldn't get what they wanted. (Chuckles)
- MK: You had schooling in camp, how about in terms of your religion?
- TO: I don't remember having services in Jerome. I think we did have Sunday school in Tule Lake, if I remember correctly. It was like everyday schedule. Sunday you go to church and that kind of stuff. It was nothing outstanding.
- MK: And that was at Tule Lake?
- TO: Tule Lake, yes. But Jerome, I don't recall. I was so busy trying to get organized I guess. Get established, the school and all the activities that went on.
- MK: As a kid there at Jerome, what organized activities were there for you folks besides school?
- TO: I think most of the games were at school. Like, the after-school activities of different things, but I don't exactly remember playing baseball or basketball or anything like that. But, I think at Tule Lake they did have some sports activities. By then I was older so I

- guess I would play some games. There were fourth grade, fifth grade—elementary school kids playing. I don't think---they may have had activities in the school, but it was just part of the whole school.
- MK: For adults like your mom, what was there in terms of social activities?
- TO: I think they used to talk a lot at the mess hall, after their work. I don't remember if they went and had any kind of organized meeting. I'm sure she did. But I don't remember.
- MK: You mentioned that sometimes the nisei soldiers. . . .
- TO: Yes, they came to visit. Yes.
- MK: Tell us about that.
- TO: I remember they came and they were soldiers who grew up in Wahiawa Camp, so my mother knew them. So they came to visit her and the kids. But they were older men, in my mind anyway.
- MK: What did you think of them?
- TO: I thought they were big. (WN chuckles.) Then with the outfit and all that and they're leaving a jacket, a big jacket and big boots. I'm trying to wear the big boots. That's about the only thing I remember. They were talking to my mother most of the time. The kids were running around.
- MK: From some people I've heard the families tried to provide some *gochisō* for the visiting men.
- TO: I don't remember that. They came and I remember they coming to the room and talking story. I guess my mother was talking to them mostly than I was. We were kids running around.
- MK: All that time you folks were at Jerome, how long was that?
- TO: I was thinking about a year and a half. Roughly. Because we were (in the camps) four years, and I thought it was maybe two [i.e. two years in each camp], but it may have been a little (more) one way or the other (at each camp).
- MK: During that time, how much contact did you have with your father, while you folks were at Jerome?
- TO: I kind of recall traveling from Jerome to Louisiana, because he was transferred from New Mexico to Louisiana to be close to us I guess. But that was, I think, just very briefly. I remember just maybe—well maybe it was several times, but I know that we did visit him one time. Soon after that we were at Tule Lake, and he joined us at Tule Lake.
- MK: What do you remember of that one time you went?
- TO: God, I don't remember very much. We may have gone on a bus. I don't think---maybe it was a train. I have no idea. But I remember visiting one time. I may have been several times (chuckles).
- MK: Then you folks moved to Tule Lake. How come?
- TO: This I learned later on, that people who went to Tule Lake were the renegades. Then these guys were going to be sent (back) to Japan. Exchange or whatever. Go back to Japan. There were a lot of people who were anti-America or whatever. They were there. When the war ended, I remember my dad writing to (the Hawai'i) delegate in Congress, to change the orders so we can go back to Hawai'i. That I remember, because we were

going to be shipped out. I remember some of the other people, they said they exchanged—even before the war ended—exchanged people to Japan for exchange of prisoners or whatever.

MK: So from your under . . .

TO: From my understanding, I didn't know all this was going on. Just the idea that we were going back to Japan, I knew that's where we were headed for. But the war ended and fortunately rescinded the order and we went back to Hawai'i. Took a while.

MK: So, when you were at Tule Lake, you were under the understanding that you folks were going to go to Japan?

TO: At that time I didn't know that. Later on when I (learned that) all the Tule Lake people were going to be shipped back to Japan, that's what stuck in my mind. But that was later on when I learned that. Not at that time, because at that time I was just growing up with the kids.

MK: I was wondering, where did you exactly get reunited with your father?

TO: I think it was at Tule Lake. I don't think he came to Arkansas to go up there, but I don't remember if that happened. We went as a family to Tule Lake, so he may have been there or maybe he came afterwards. I don't remember.

MK: One of your brothers (Walter) was born there.

TO: Yes, Walter was born there. I remember taking my mother and going to the hospital to visit. I was surprised they let me in. Maybe I wasn't let in. But I remember going to the hospital and I don't remember seeing a baby, so they may have not allowed me to go and visit them during the war. I'm not sure. But I remember going to the hospital, but I don't remember seeing the baby there. (Laughs)

That visit was a little more (clearer) to me, structured fence with guard towers close by. We used to go play out in a field. I remember my dad used to golf with some people along the perimeter of the camp. It's all sandy but they had golf clubs and they were hitting the ball along the fence because there's space between the buildings and the fence. So he used to do that with some other menfolks. I was too young to play golf anyway. He went golfing, I remember.

MK: What was life like for your parents at Tule Lake?

TO: To me, they were just as busy as when we were on Kaua'i. My dad was at the office—working in the office—and organizing all the stuff. My mother was still working in the kitchen—dining room. We were off to school in the morning and the afternoon. Activities, I remember playing baseball off in the field. So, we did have probably softball. I think it was softball more than baseball. We used to chase some of these seagulls. Lots of seagulls all over the place. We used to throw rocks at them and all that. I never hit one, but (laughs) we were throwing rocks at the seagulls. There were lots of them around.

MK: By the time you folks were at Tule Lake, you're a little bit older and how was your relationship with *kotonks*?

TO: I think by that time, we were speaking almost like *kotonks* I guess.

(Laughter)

I don't recall conflicts between *kotonks* and Hawai'i Japanese, because they were all grouped together and we were going to be shipped to Japan. We were treated like Japanese nationals I guess. I'm not sure. I don't remember the conflict as much as at Jerome.

MK: You were mentioning that your father was also very busy working in the office . . .

TO: In the block office, yes.

MK: Was he also doing ministerial duties too, because he was a *bon-san*?

TO: That I don't know. I don't remember, because there were a lot of other ministers too. My dad's assistant was younger. I remember going to his writing class. That was pretty impressive.

I used to go to junior high school and went (to Japanese school). It was to me just going to school and that wasn't even high school. Just starting eighth grade. I may have just started, high school. Before then it was kind of middle—junior high school or something like that. We did learn Japanese. I was surprised how much I learned in Japanese. Mathematics, I think we were studying algebra by then already. I was in the seventh and eighth grade. The teachers—there were some *haole* teachers I remember. There were other Japanese teachers too. The Japanese-language school had Japanese (teachers).

MK: You were mentioning in the Japanese-language school, the curriculum was . . .

TO: It was really structured and it was really strict, I remember. Because my mother and my dad they were after me to get everything correctly.

MK: How were you taking all this?

TO: I think I was just moving with the flow I guess. Growing up with the other kids. I don't remember any incident that stuck in my mind. I think I attended classes and leaving eighth grade, I wasn't even aware of girls at that time.

(Laughter)

I remember, we're just all playmates. Running around together and going to Japanese school together. To me it was a normal life just growing up.

MK: Tule Lake they say, there were people who were decidedly pro-Japanese at that camp.

TO: I didn't sense any of that. I wasn't aware. It's later on that I read a lot of stuff and I learned about that.

MK: I see.

TO: Even trying to recall who were pro-Japanese and who were not. . . . it didn't come back to me. I think I was unaware of all that.

MK: Were you aware of any incidents or conflicts that occurred at Tule Lake?

TO: The only time I remember having to go to the hospital—I'm going through gates, then locked going into the next area for the hospital. At least that's what my recollection is. Other than that, we were surrounded by fence and I think two double fence. One and two. One was low and the other was farther out. Out there is just wide open spaces. And there's Castle Rock up there and Abalone Mountain on this side. I don't think we explored outside the compound. The only thing I remember is going to the hospital. Going through these gates and then guards standing. That's what I remember.

MK: So you don't have a recollection of going outside of Tule Lake?

TO: No, I don't have any recollection of going outside the fence, other than that time we went to the hospital.

MK: You're conscious of the gates. How about the guards?

- TO: I think there was a lot of space between the barracks and the fence. It was a wide open space. That's where my dad used to golf, between the barracks and the fence. I mean, there were wide open spaces. I know there were a lot of space between, but we never did go to the fence. There's nothing out there except the fence.
- MK: Sometimes I've heard of people doing a little *hatake*, a little planting. How about your family?
- TO: I don't remember. I don't think my mother was a gardener, my father was not a gardener. He was more office kind of person and church, and all the church members used to have gardens. But after we came back I remember planting a garden in the backyard. Lettuce and tomatoes and a papaya tree.
- MK: But that's when you folks came back?
- TO: Yes, after we went back to Kaua'i. But before that I don't remember.
- MK: What do you remember about leaving camp?
- TO: I guess I took it all as the same process we left Hawai'i, went to camp, going there, and going here. So, it's just part of the whole trip coming back. So, I don't really remember too much.
- MK: When you came back to Hawai'i, where did you folks live?
- TO: We went back to the church. (Wahiawa) Camp. The minister's cottage attached to the church. So we went back there I remember.
- MK: How was the minister's cottage and the temple when you came back?
- TO: I think they were maintained pretty well. I remember later on they had to refurbish the church because there were. . . fix the roof and repaint because it was kind of dilapidated I guess. But, I came back and then later on we had all the scrolls and hangings and some of them were almost ancient drawings of devil eating rice that's on fire and that kind of stuff. That was kind of impressive to me. But I did not see them anymore. Most of them were all wall hangings.
- MK: So they were all intact?
- TO: I think they were intact at that time. I remember they were starting up some of the meditation classes at the Sunday school. I don't think they had judo and *kendō*, because I remember going to YMCA classes. So YM classes. Activity classes. Cooking for boys and that kind of stuff.
- I think that's probably when I started becoming aware of girls. I mean I never talk about girls.
- (Laughter)
- All of a sudden, oh dear, I'm in high school. I guess I was in high school freshman year. It struck me.
- MK: How did the kids in Kaua'i react to you? You came back from the Mainland.
- TO: I felt like I had come back from prison. I told you that. I felt really---I think some of the older folks felt like that too. So, they never wanted to talk about their experience. I always felt uncomfortable, because my classmates from way back when, they had fun fishing and doing all the kid stuff that I never did. I kind of felt like I was left out and a little different from them.

I remember going back to elementary school and the principal calling me into the office and says, “At the next assembly we’re going to have you be the emcee.” Emcee, I didn’t know it was emcee, but that’s basically what (I was). Get in front of the audience and announce whatever she told me to do. Boy, I think, “Gee, I hated to do that.” So, I quickly learned pidgin as fast as I could.

(Laughter)

I remember going to work in the kitchen, because at all the elementary schools, we have to clean the classroom, mop the floor, and that kind of stuff. I remember doing those things.

But then I kind of gradually got into it and we went to high school. I remember having to wear shoes to school to Waimea High School for the first time. Boy that was so (laughs) uncomfortable. I remember going to elementary school all barefooted all this time from (first to) eighth grade.

MK: So even though you wore shoes on the Mainland, you . . .

TO: Oh, I got barefooted and boy, everybody else was running around barefooted (MK laughs.), so that’s what we did. I remember going up into the room and up on the veranda, (and got) scolded. “Wash your feet before you get up there!” So there was a place where (one) can wash (one’s) feet before you get into the house. But I got a lot of duties at that time. Sweep and mop the veranda around the church and our living room. Keep our living room spick-and-span because we had visitors come in and we needed to be ready for them.

MK: So when you came back then, it was like a resumption of . . .

TO: Well, resumption and getting more duties I thought. Rake the yard, mow the lawn, because I’m older now. (Laughs)

MK: How did people react to your family having come back from camp?

TO: I think the parents who raised us basically, they were open-minded and they fell back into babysitting the kids and all that kind of stuff. Some of the kids of the family, they’re older now, so they’re in high school. They kind of babysat and did things like that too. So we kind of moved right (back) into the routine life of plantation camp. My feeling “I was different” or feeling that I was coming out of prison, sort of lasted until I went to college. Freshman year when I first entered writing class—freshman English to write an autobiography, one thousand words or whatever.

(Taping is interrupted, then resumes.)

To write that long composition, I never did that in my life. I remember that means I had to really write a lot. Autobiography, so (one) can write all kinds of stuff. So that’s when I really poured out my feelings, how I felt like coming out of prison. My writing professor wrote me back, I think about three-page response in red ink. Just pages of it. So I thought, “Wow.” That really straightened me out. After that, that feeling of being different changed. I kind of went about my business and forgot about camp life.

MK: Where did you go to school in Kaua‘i when you came back?

TO: First, back to ‘Ele‘ele School my eighth grade year. Then, after that for ninth and tenth grade, I went to Waimea High School. To Waimea High School, we had to ride the bus from Wahiawa to Waimea High School which was about—I estimate—about ten miles. The teacher from Kalāheo who was a biology teacher drove the truck with benches in it covered by the tarp going to Waimea High School.

MK: You didn’t graduate from Waimea High School.

TO: No, no. So, during my sophomore year, my mother says, “You’re not studying hard enough.”

I said, “No, what do you mean? I finished all my homework at study hall,” because we all had study hall. I did. So I come home and I’m listening to the radio and then all “The Shadow” and Batman and whatever programs they had on.

She said, “You’re going to MPI [Mid-Pacific Institute].” Because my classmates’ parents had the oldest son and the second son, who was my classmate, who went there. So she said, “Next year you’re going to MPI.” After so much stories about MPI being a jail house and being cooped up and you can’t go out. The dean comes and checks up on you during study hour after dinner. (We needed) to be at our desk studying. I think she remembers that. So that’s where I went (for my) junior and senior years.

To me I guess that was a good thing (chuckles) after I look back I guess that’s when I really began to learn how to learn I guess. Waimea High School was kind of easy, and I remember I was a sophomore taking algebra and something else, but there were other juniors and seniors in the same class. So, during study hall and after school they would come and I help them with algebra homework and all that. So I used to help them. Some of the ladies I remembered their names at that time, but now I’ve forgotten them. Some of the older sisters of my classmates.

So it was kind of fun time, but we didn’t have time to go (out for) afterschool sports because we had to catch the bus and to get home. When we got home and we had Japanese-language schools beginning to start up again. Then they sent me to MPI, so that kind of changed everything.

MK: Having been on the Mainland and going to the Mainland camps, how did that education on the Mainland affect how you fared?

TO: It seems like I was doing okay, because I remember going back to the elementary school and there was a librarian named Ms. Kumabe. There was a teacher. Maybe it was a twin sister or maybe the sister. There was Ms. Kumabe. My mother used to get after me to read a lot. She couldn’t understand English, so I would sit down and read and I’d say, “You don’t understand . . .”

[She said], “Never mind. Just sit down and read loudly.” In Japanese, of course. And I’m reading aloud, the book. One time I was thinking, the library is not that big I’ll take from (one end) and start reading the books shelf to shelf. I was checking out all the books from the elementary school library.

MK: Was that before camp or after?

TO: No, no. After camp. After eighth grade when I came back (to Kaua’i for) eighth grade. Then after I went to—I think I was still eighth grade, and my kid brothers were younger and the teachers would get after me, “You better teach your brothers how to read.” I had to sit down and teach them how to read because they wouldn’t learn. They weren’t reading quite as well I guess. I remember enjoying reading so I read a lot of books. Some of the books that really struck me were [about] the ancient three- and four-mast sailing ships. I used to read all the stories from that one author, Charles N. Hall. I remember his name. I was reading all his book.

MK: Then, so ‘Ele‘ele, Waimea High, Mid-Pac. . . .

TO: Mid-Pac. Then after Mid-Pac, I went to UH [University of Hawai‘i]. At UH I was asked, “What are you going to be? What are you going to be?” I got tired of the question. I didn’t know what I wanted to be.

So, one quick response was, “I’m going to be a doctor.” That stopped all the questions.

“Oh, he’s going to be a doctor. Okay.” That stopped all the questions. So I signed up for pre-med. Pre-med freshman year. Sophomore year I had lab (work) five afternoons a week. God I was busy. (When I) came to class where we had dissection of the frog and (coughing in background). God, I don’t think I want to be a doctor. (Chuckles.) So, being pre-med you had all the science and math, so I said I’m going to major in chemistry. So chemistry was my major.

During my junior year, I had ROTC [Reserve Officers’ Training Corps] then. They said you can take advanced ROTC and they’ll pay you. If you (attend) advance ROTC they’ll help you pay the tuition and stuff like that. I had five afternoon labs a week, and then coming to seven o’clock in the morning for ROTC. I couldn’t do that because I was working at the bookstore. After we closed I went to the library to shelve books. Then, having to get up and go to ROTC, forget it. Plus, (even if) they send you to Air Force ROTC, they won’t accept you because (I wore) glasses. At that time that’s what they said. So, okay, I’ll quit. So, I quit ROTC.

But just then, my father’s friend’s son was working at Kapi‘olani Hospital as a med tech and a lab tech for evenings. Afternoon and evening night shift. He says, “Oh, you’re a chemistry major, you can do that.” So, I got the job over there. So I worked there plus worked in the bookstore in between classes. That’s what I did.

MK: When did you graduate?

TO: In [19]54. Four years. Then just as I was---soon after graduating or maybe before I graduated they said, “They’re going to cut out the GI Bill. So, you better volunteer, because you may not get drafted by the end of the year and they’ll run out (of the GI Bill) at the end of the year. So, you’d better volunteer.” So, I volunteered into the service. Then they shipped me to Fort Ord, California for training. After Fort Ord they shipped me to Alabama for chemical, biological, and radiological warfare training. That’s where I got more training in biochemistry and other things.

They shipped me overseas and sent me over as a petroleum chemist, because they needed petroleum chemists for the pipeline that was from Spain to Germany. So I went to Germany and the guy (there) said, “We don’t need any more petroleum chemists. We got too many.” So we sat there in Germany for about a month until they reassigned me. So then they reassigned me to the medical laboratory, the biggest laboratory in Europe. That’s where I served as a biochemist. We were doing some basic research and doing tests on drugs. Specialized testing. When small labs couldn’t do (them), they sent it to us, so we were doing that. It was a good (assignment).

MK: That was good. (Laughs)

TO: That was good. That was good. During that time I was so bored doing the lab work. So much experimental stuff. So, I got involved in everything I could. Basketball—I wasn’t that tall but I turned out for the basketball. Volleyball team. They had a glee club at one point. (MK and TO chuckle.) And bowling and everything I could think of. I had fun.

MK: Then eventually. . . .

TO: Came back to Hawai‘i. When I came back---when I was thinking about coming back, when I graduated there wasn’t much job for chemists in Hawai‘i. All the jobs were given to *haole* folks. So the only job that was available would be in the sugar plantation where you’d test sugar content or whatever. That’s really boring. You go to the Pineapple Institute. You test for pineapple. Again, just basic tests. God, that would be boring (too). So then I applied to see if I can get an early release so I can get (back) to school early to become a teacher, but they wouldn’t release me.

So, finally I got released in time in September to enroll in the master’s program at the University of Hawai‘i. When I (went) there and (the advisor said), “Before you can get a master’s, you’ve got to finish your basic, your basic bachelor’s in education.”

I said, “Well, I have a bachelor of arts, (with a) chemistry major.”

“Well, you need education (classes).”

So, okay, restart. I worked on my bachelor of education and finish that and went to the master's program to get the teaching certificate. So I got a master's in education after that.

MK: Then with the degree in hand, you. . . .

TO: I went to teach at Farrington High School, first year. Then they assigned me to McKinley [High School], and at that time teachers were all—they had to serve out in the outer island or rural area before one can come back to Honolulu, but they couldn't find a chemistry teacher. I was the only one qualified, so I got right into McKinley High School. I was so young, because all the teachers had all transferred in from other places and were much older. The incident I remember is sitting in the auditorium and this vice principal in charge of assemblies—she's standing right in front of me and said, “Where is the teacher for this class?” Right in front of me.

“I'm the teacher.” (Laughs)

MK: You were so youthful.

TO: I blended in 'cause I was so young. After that there was a biology teacher who was much older, and she kind of took care of me and told me what kind of stuff to do. So, I got really adjusted quickly.

The chemistry teacher who left, left (the chemical) storeroom in such a shamble. I don't think they were teaching (chemistry) classes—to me—properly. There were a lot of chemicals in there and they never used it. Some of the chemicals were stored and it was dangerous. Having phosphorus, had to be kept under water, and the water had evaporated, and (if it got in touch with) the air it'll burst into flame. That kind of stuff. There were a lot of poisonous chemicals. Oh my goodness. And the lab was—the lab table was lead-lined because when you're working in lab you didn't want the wooden tables to get all drenched, so they lead-lined them. God, lead on the table and they'll think, “Oh, that's poisonous.”

Whole bottle of mercury in the storeroom. I said, “Gee whiz. These guys, don't know anything.”

So I started getting rid of stuff and I told the state department [of education], “This lab is dangerous. We've got to have a new building, (a new) science building.” I kept after (the science head) and I remembered the science coordinator. And I said, I guess he (didn't) want me back in his office.

He said, “Okay, go and design a building.” So I went to the UH and designed a circular building with the (auditorium classrooms) in the center and the chemical lab and all the fume (hoods) and everything.

So I (went) back and said, “This is a lab building.”

“Oh no, you cannot have that kind of lab. We're going to make it (the) same like Farrington's.” Farrington was the most recent high school building, so we had the same old stuff. Had (no) air conditioning in there and everything. It was so hot at McKinley, I said, “How can you stand that?” That went for naught.

MK: How long did you stay at McKinley?

TO: I taught one semester at Farrington. Two years at McKinley. When I was at McKinley, the university—my major professor said, “Hey Ted, there's an open position so I want you to apply.”

“Oh, is that right? I taught only high school two-and-a-half years.”

“No, no. Just apply.” So I went out for the interview and I ran into my intern supervisor and she was applying for the same job. Oh God, I wondered why did they invite me when they had a real qualified teacher to take over. So I went into the interview really relaxed. I said I’m not going to get the job. There were about twelve people around a U-shaped table (to) conduct the interview. (I sat) in front and they’re going to ask you questions and you responded. So, I was relaxed and I just answered the questions. When I got the job, I couldn’t believe it. So I went to university at that time and that was at the (College of Ed UH) laboratory school. They were training teachers—all the teachers had to go to the lab school. So, we were training science and lab teachers. There was a lab. Others did the math part and I did the science part. Biology, chemistry, physics.

MK: About what year were you at lab school?

TO: It was in. . . [19]62 to ’65, I think. Maybe it was ’62 into ’65. The state legislators got in the mix. One of the legislator’s kid couldn’t get into UH (Lab School). I’m at University High School and boy that made a ruckus. We used to go to the hearings and all that and how they didn’t have the “real training” of the public schools, so we’re going to send all the student teachers outside. So then I went to the hearing and all that. They never listened anyway. (Laughs) So they said we’re going to change the lab school to a research and developmental center. So we’re going to develop curriculum. That’s what we’re going to do.

WN: Who were the other science teachers at the lab school at that time?

TO: There was Wil Kyselka who passed away not too long ago. (Pause) (Also, Bob Campbell)

WN: I went there.

TO: You went there?

WN: Yeah, yeah.

TO: Is that right?

WN: I graduated [19]67, so I was there. You were there.

TO: Is that right?

WN: You taught chemistry.

TO: You said [19]67 or ’57?

WN: [Nineteen] sixty-seven.

TO: Okay, I was gone in 1965—’65 I left.

WN: Oh, [19]65 you left.

TO: Yes, I was there [19]63 through ’65.

WN: When I was like eighth grade, ninth grade. . .

TO: Was that right?

WN: . . . you were probably there.

TO: Yes. I remember having to teach—talk to an elementary school class. I said, “God, how do I talk to elementary kids? They don’t know the vocabulary about science.” I was really nervous. How am I going to talk to elementary kids about science?

WN: Was there an Albert Carr there?

TO: Yes, Albert Carr was there. He was---Albert Carr, yes. Al Carr was there.

WN: Norma Carr's husband.

MK: And your brother and sister. . . .

TO: And Morris Pang was there.

WN: Morris Pang was math teacher.

TO: Was a math teacher. Yes.

WN: Okay, I'll go look at my old yearbooks then. You'll probably be in there.

TO: Andrew In.

WN: Andrew In.

TO: Andrew In. Before he became the dean of the School of Ed.

WN: Daniel Noda was our principal.

TO: Yes, Dan Noda was the principal. I remember he fought for me. When I got the job, we went to the contract (office) on salary. "We had to take a cut in pay coming from the public school to here."

[I said], "What do you mean cut in pay?" (WN and TO laugh.) So, he fought for me and I think he raised it a little bit. But then I learned a lesson, because when I went to the next school, I figured you don't take what they're going to give you. You (negotiate) for your own salary. The next change I had the same kind of problem.

"Oh, this is a Willamette University and you should be honored to teach here."

Honor? (I thought) I cannot eat honor. I've got to feed my family. (WN and TO laugh.) I didn't tell them that, but I (presented my case) and I said, "Look, when I was a public school teacher I had this much and I had to take a cut in pay when I went to (teach at) UH. Now you're telling me (that) I have to take a cut in pay? I already taught at a university. So I (sort) of argued with them. By the end when I retired I was making a little more than some of the full professors (teaching) there. So I was okay. (Laughs)

MK: So after UH, you went. . . .

TO: At UH I had a (full-ride) scholarship from [Science] Foundation. So I went to Oregon State University. That was a full ride so I could (get family) allowance. So I took my wife and two kids and we went to Oregon. But, I cannot stay there just for one year, because to go there and back after one year is just too expensive. So (I told my wife,) "We're going to stay there at least two years."

After the first year, the grants ran out, so I got to TA [teaching assistant]. The TA doesn't pay much. "I think you've got to go to work." She had that year off so she was babysitting the neighbor's kids. I was (taking classes) at Oregon State and all that, so she enjoyed life. We had all these meetings with the academic year institute (families). Family gatherings and all that. So she had fun, but she said, "No, I've got to go back to work." She accepted the reality, so she applied and she got the job right away.

MK: What kind of work did Mrs. Ozawa do?

TO: Teacher. She was teaching over here. She (taught) in the (Hawai'i) public school system. . . .

MK: I see, then you started working at Willamette in [19]72? Around there?

TO: Yes. Because I was in grad school and TA and I was working on my dissertation and there were some other things that happened during that time. Then I got a job, at Willamette, so I said, "Oh, I'll take it." I hadn't finished my dissertation yet but a lot of (things happened). Then there were some other things like my major professor retired and my committee members kind of (had personal problems). At that time, Willamette did not require that I finish my degree. So they didn't really push too hard.

So I said, "No, I'm getting a good pay. I'll just stay in." We got so busy anyway.

MK: So you taught in the College of Ed at Willamette?

TO: Yes. It was under the liberal arts program and there was an Education Department. But gradually the laws and things changed so we had to go through the accreditation process and all that. Slowly we developed into a Graduate School of Education. So then, we became a Graduate School of Education. Because we were offering master's of education program in order for students to qualify for teaching certificates. So, our level of teaching was graduate anyway. So then they added—this was only secondary. Then (we started) the elementary program which includes so much. We had to cover a lot. It got really busy. (We hired more staff.)

MK: Then you eventually retired, [19]94?

TO: Yes.

MK: Why did you decide to retire at that time?

TO: Well, I had a student. I think she—I'm confusing with two students, but I think she's the one that grew up in Tule Lake. Not Tule Lake camp but Tule Lake town. She went to the program—our program. And then (became one of our) supervisors. She was a good teacher. Then she went back to get her master's—well she got her master's from us—so she got her PhD in education (at Oregon State University). She applied for the job. I said we had an opening and she applied, then got the job. But they only gave one-year contracts for three years. I said, "God, she's really good. Why do you have to extend another one-year contract like that?" I told everyone, "I'll retire and she can take my position." (Chuckles)

She later became the chairman (of the department). She was that good. Soon after—one year, two years, she became the chairman. (Laughs) She was good.

MK: When did you return to Hawai'i?

TO: Well, let's see. We've been here a year and a half. That's when we moved back. But five years before that, I knew I was coming back. Because I was helping my mother who was at a care home up there. (Harry & Jeanette Weinberg) Center (near Lanakila). We used to come home—I used to come home about four or five times a year. Two weeks at a time, because it was so expensive (to hire caregivers). All my brothers (and sister) took turns to care for her, stay with her, because she needed twenty-four hour care. So at that time I was thinking, gosh my kids, they have nicer homes than I do. They have good jobs. I don't need to worry about them. So I told them, "I'm going to move. I'm going to sell my house. You're not going to get any of that money. I'm just going to put it right in here." So we had come back to visit. Kahala Nui. Then went to Arcadia. (We were) ready to sign up over there, on the waiting list. But (they said,) "We are going to build a new one." Okay, we'll sign up for the new one. It'll be in two years they said. So, okay, two years, there's time (for us to) downsize and do all that. Two years became three years; (then) became four years. So, until finally we moved in a year-and-a-half ago (in 2011). But, it worked out real nicely.

MK: Maybe I'll---in our concluding questions, you know, I'm wondering, having been through World War II and having been placed in a camp with your family, what are your thoughts on that experience?

TO: You know, when I was at the university, I was reading as much of the books as I can. There were a lot of stories about this and that. I must have read I don't know, about forty books? Gradually (I began) to understand the whole (relocation) process. I can see why the Japanese people say *shikata ga nai*. It's just by happenstance that we got caught in the war and got into that kind of situation. As I look back, I'd say that this experience was an educational experience for me, because of all these different things that happened to me. After I retired—or even before I retired—we traveled a lot. So, we got to see a lot of perspectives from different foreign countries. I keep telling—because my wife may not feel like that—but I thought we're fortunate the way our lives kind of set into a pattern. We learned a lot more, and our kids went to school on the Mainland. They are (very rich with) their experience compared to our friends' kids who grew up over here. It's quite different. They have a lot broader mind.

Even my daughter, she went to Willamette University on (a tuition) exchange program, since I was teaching there, (she got) tuition free. So, that was helpful. She went to Japan on an exchange program to our sister college there. That kind of developed her a lot too.

Even my son. Well, my son was more on the quiet side. Even his education. He didn't want to go to Willamette. "I want to go to someplace warmer." Because you know, Oregon is so cold. So he applied for school in Santa Clara. Wow, okay that's a nice warm climate, but he wasn't accepted over there. But, he (had) also applied to University of Pacific (U.O.P.) and he was accepted over there. That's a warm climate. Stockton. Nice and warm. Even though they didn't have a similar exchange program, one of their professor's kids wanted to attend Willamette, so they did the exchange and he was able to go there. But, U.O.P. had a little higher tuition than Willamette, so I kind of had to pay the difference. But even then, that was very helpful. It worked out pretty nicely.

MK: So you look back on the war experience as sort of like an . . .

TO: Well, it (was truly) a learning experience. Enlarged my experience. The mind opened up.

MK: Warren, do you have any questions?

TO: I think all the experience kind of helped me, because even at Willamette I was kind of—to me when I look back, I was the first Asian hired (in recent history). (W.U. is the oldest university west of the Missouri River.) Because they're all *haoles*, and to me they hired me for my minority background because they started to talk about minorities, you know. So I got into that and I got into the Title IX programs. Changed the rules and regulations. I started a cultural—multicultural—education class. That kind of helped expand (the program) even more so. I was surprised how limited even the (students at) Willamette (were). They came from small towns out in the country, and boy they were so naive. They just needed to expand their horizons.

So, kind of—to me, it was a good life. It's just part of my growing up from eighth grade (onward).

WN: You had an unusual growing up. (Laughs)

TO: Oh yes.

WN: A little interruption there.

TO: But that was a (great) learning experience I'm sure.

MK: Should we [close]?

WN: Okay.

MK: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Unspoken Memories:

Oral Histories of Hawai‘i Internees at Jerome, Arkansas

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa**

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